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SOURCE L'AOF.FRENCH WEST AFRICAN LABOR-UNION CONFERENCES

DAKAR LABOR CONFERENCE FORMULATES DEMANDS, MAPS FUTURE ACTION -- Dakar, L'AOF, 13 Oct 52

The Conference Intersyndicale Africaine (African Interunion Conference) convened in Dakar in the Labor Exchange Building from 6 to 8 October 1952 to study labor problems in French West Africa and French Togoland. Present at this conference were delegates from the following organizations of French West Africa and French Togoland: The Federation Autonome des Cheminots Africains (Autonomous Federation of African Railroad Workers), the CFTC (Confederation Francaise des Travailleurs Chretiens, French Confederation of Christian workers), and the CGT (Confederation Generale du Travail, General Confederation of Labor). The agenda of the conference included the following points:

1. Examination of the Labor Code.
2. Study of ways to fight on behalf of the labor movement.
3. Coordination of decisions to be carried out.
4. Resolutions.
5. Establishment of the Africa and Paris Delegation.
6. Civil service (personnel reduction, decree of 1932, on-the-job accidents).

Delegates came from the following territories and areas (numbers in parenthesis refer to the number of delegates): French Guinea (6); Niger (1); Upper Volta (5); Saint Louis and Mauritania (6); Casamance (1); Louga (1); Kaolack (3); Thies (7); Dahomey and French Togoland (3); Ivory Coast (2); French Sudan (16); and Dakar (14).

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Demands formulated by the conference were as follows:

1. In view of the fact that the Law of 30 June 1950 (affecting African civil servants in particular) has not been applied to civil servants in French Togoland, immediate application of said law to include French Togoland.
2. Payment of the special 40-percent supplement to all categories of classified civil servants, i.e., to the cadre general (general category), the cadre superieur (higher /so-called European/ category), and the cadre local (local category), according to the provisions of the Law of 30 June 1950.
3. Equality in the distribution of family allotments to all civil servants.
4. Continuation of periodic 6-month leave in France and of the pay differential to African civil servants who serve outside of their places of residence and who rank with personnel of the general and higher categories, in accordance with the ministerial directive on finances issued by the Ministry of French Overseas Territories on 21 May 1951.
5. Demands for civil service improvements:
 - a. Granting of leave not later than 3 months after the date of request.
 - b. Return to the 1948 travel system.
 - c. Integration of qualified employees into higher categories in accordance with laws and regulations put into effect since their original appointment.
 - d. Correction of the classification indices of the local category according to the following schedule:
 - (1) Unclassified personnel without academic certificates: indices, 125 to 275.
 - (2) Personnel with technical knowledge who have passed a competitive examination: indices 160 to 350.
 - (3) Personnel with a study certificate (no competitive examination required): indices 245 to 470.
 - (4) Personnel with a study certificate who have passed a competitive examination: indices 265 to 491.
 - e. Raising of requirements for the following positions to include possession of the CEP /not identified/ and passing of a competitive examination: forest wardens, customs seamen, policemen, firemen, officials of the Department of Waters and Forests; health inspectors in Senegal and Upper Volta, post-office carriers and supervisors, and interpreters in Niger.
 - f. Raising of requirements for administrative agents to include possession of the brevet elementaire (elementary school certificate) without competitive examination (classification indices 300 to 540).
6. Demands on behalf of auxiliary workers /crafts, protective, and custodial/ and day laborers employed by the government:
 - a. Day laborers should be given the status of auxiliary workers and their seniority taken into consideration.
 - b. Auxiliary workers with 3 years of service should be integrated into the local category.
 - c. Family allowances should be extended to include auxiliary workers.
 - d. Free transportation for workers on regular leave.

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7. Measures proposed after examining Circular No DIR-CAB of 9 July 1952 relative to the personnel reduction advocated by the administration:

- a. Release of all pensioners employed under contract.
- b. Review of all contracts and rescission of all improper contracts such as the following: (1) contracts covered by the UNISYNDI (Union Interayndicale d'Entreprises et d'Industries de l'Afrique Occidentale Francaise, Federation of Unions of Commercial and Industrial Workers of French West Africa) Convention; (2) contracts calling for wages equivalent to those of top-bracket classified workers; and (3) contracts to unmarried women.
- c. Release of all administrative workers above the age limit.
- d. Designation of a Civil Service Commission to serve as a permanent arbitration commission responsible for making decisions on conditions of personnel hiring, transfers, and discharges; this commission should comprise representatives of labor unions concerned.
- e. Requirement of all government agencies to hire their personnel (classified, contractual, and auxiliary) through said commission.
- f. Release of married women whose husbands receive a monthly income equal to or more than 50,000 francs.
- g. Restrictions on transfers of personnel from territory to territory.
- h. Reduction of luxury expenses for vehicles, refrigerators, furniture, etc.).

Because of its strong desire to see the Labor Code applied in Africa by 1 January 1953 at the latest, the conference decided to wage an all-out attack on the absence of labor legislation in French Black Africa and to invite workers and their unions to organize and support their action by appropriate means and ways of fighting for their demands.

The conference praised the work of the following labor unions for their united action with respect to the Labor Code: the CGT, the CFTC, the Federation Autonome des Cheminots Africains, and the Union Autonome de la Cote d'Ivoire (Autonomous Workers' Union of the Ivory Coast).

The conference went on record as (1) regretting the refusal of the FO (Force Ouvriere, Labor Force) to participate in bringing the Labor Code issue to a head; (2) condemning all those who contributed in any way to sabotaging passage of the draft of the code (delaying its being voted on by the parliamentary assemblies) as enemies of the emancipation of the French overseas peoples and of the true French Union; (3) paying homage to the many efforts of French and world trade-unions and to the territorial and metropolitan movements, parties, and progressive parliamentary representatives for their hand in the formulation of the Labor Code and their efforts towards its immediate application; (4) affirming that, under the present situation, only decisive and unanimous action by the African working class is capable of weakening and defeating reactionary opposition; and (5) asking the unions to maintain and develop, throughout their organization, their united action to foil the opposition.

As a practical means of action, the conference advocated the widest possible publicity for its decisions in all labor circles, in particular, and in all strata of the African population, in general, to develop the consciousness and combativeness of the masses. It advocated widening the front of the struggle to all categories of workers both in private enterprise and in government by working out a complete program of demands favoring not only their collective action, but also the total support of the African peoples. It appealed strongly to all African unions to make Sunday, 26 October 1952, a great Demand Day throughout Black Africa by organizing meetings, parades, and other forms of collective action.

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The conference further decided that: (1) a 24-hour general strike would take place Monday 3 November 1952 to protest the delay in the formulation of the Labor Code; (2) a 72-hour general strike would take place from 12 to 14 January 1953 throughout French West Africa and French Togoland, if the Labor Code were not promulgated before 5 January 1953; and (3) the political representatives of Black Africa and their parties would be invited to seal their unity of action by giving their full support to the struggle on behalf of the Labor Code.

The conference designated the members of the CGT-CFTC-Federation Autonome des Cheminots Africains Coordination Committee to take charge of information and coordination of the activities related to the workers' struggle, in addition to its role as permanent representative before public and all other authorities. In case of necessity, it was decided that this committee will be responsible for making preparations to hold an extraordinary conference of the Territorial Coordination Committees. The conference delegates resolved that the text of the Law of 30 June 1950 does not correspond to the aspirations of the African worker, especially as regards the following articles:

Article 1 -- This has replaced the concept "worker" with that of "salaried worker."

Article 2 -- This tends to re-establish forced labor.

Article 6 and 9 -- These adversely affect labor-union freedom.

Article 18 -- This removes the right of unions to buy and sell tools and products (a right obtained under Article 6 of the Decree of 17 August 1944 on unions in French West Africa).

Article 35 -- This pertains to the internal regulation of unions.

Article 42 -- This sanctions layoffs.

Article 100 -- This implies abolition of the 40-hour-week concept.

Article 144 -- This infringes on the independence of the Inspection du Travail (Labor Inspection Office).

In connection with the above articles, the conference demanded that they be replaced by the provisions contained in the draft which had been previously passed by the National Assembly. It also stated that it would support the Overseas Territories Committee's proposals regarding the other provisions of the bill.

The following demands were formulated by the conference in connection with on-the-job accidents and occupational diseases:

1. Abrogation of the decree of 2 April 1938 in view of its discriminatory and racist aspects.
2. Early passage of a law dealing with on-the-job accidents and occupational diseases in conformity with the spirit of the French Constitution and pertinent international agreements. This law is intended to compensate for the present ridiculously low payments made to persons injured on the job or suffering from occupational diseases.
3. Adjustment of workers' accident compensation, using for the time being the methods of calculation now in force in France.
4. Reopening of all worker's accident-compensation cases settled since the promulgation of the decree of 2 March 1949.

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5. Prompt attention to occupational disease coverage patterned after the coverage now in force in France.

KAOLACK LABOR CONFERENCE APPROVES RESOLUTIONS OF DAKAR CONFERENCE -- Dakar, L'AOF, 4 Nov 52

The CGT, the CFTC and the Cheminots Autonomes (Autonomous Railroad Workers) of Senegal and Mauritania held a conference at Kaolack on 19 October 1952. The chairman of the conference was Samake Moreau; the secretary was N'Dao Mamadou N'Dene.

The conferees examined the report of the Dakar conference of 6-8 October 1952 and approved all its resolutions. They appealed to all union organizations concerned to carry out all recommended action to bring about passage of a democratic labor code. The conference then formulated the following list of demands of its own:

1. Abolition of lump-sum travel allowance and return to the former system of regular travel allowance.
2. Construction of workers' villages in all large cities and district chief towns.
3. Six-month leave every 2 years for civil servants working outside their native territory, and every 4 years for those serving in their home territory.
4. Adequate labor exchanges in all large cities and district chief towns.
5. Reimbursement of retirement fund contributions to civil servants terminating their employment because of releases or dismissals.
6. Full overtime pay to all workers.
7. Special compensation to employees handling funds.
8. Earliest possible approval of the statute for aides of the stock-raising service adopted by the Arbitration Commission in April 1952.
9. Assignment of vehicles to visiting nurses, veterinarians, and agricultural monitors for their rounds.
10. Integration of mechanics' helpers who have finished apprentice school and aides who have been graduated by a modern college into the regular classified categories.
11. Establishment of the federal classification of police constables which has been under consideration since 1949.
12. Free living quarters to members of the police as of 11 March 1945, according to Article 6 of order in council No 653CP.
13. Integration into the high category of clerks who have worked as secretaries to justices of the peace, court records secretaries, public prosecutor's secretaries, district secretariat chiefs, and all persons holding responsible positions in finance offices.
14. Integration into the higher category of all civil servants of the secondary categories.

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15. Integration, in grade, into the higher category, retroactive to 1 January 1948, of civil servants in the local and secondary categories who were accepted in 1950 or 1951 for the professional qualifying examination, on the same basis as those integrated into the higher category because of their professional qualifications.
16. Integration into the classification of finance and accounting office chiefs of all chief clerks in administrative, finance, and accounting offices, with a table of organization identical with that for teachers.
17. Integration into a regular classified category of employees under contract with 10 years of service.
18. Regular examinations which will permit chauffeurs to qualify for the public works classification.
19. Right of chauffeurs under contract to wear the uniform of regularly classified personnel.
20. Cessation of the abusive revoking of drivers' permits.
21. Integration into a regular classification of monitors' aides who failed their normal-school final examinations.
22. Reinstitution of the examination permitting monitors' aides to qualify for the secondary classification of monitors.
23. Integration of all copying clerk-monitors into the secondary classification of monitors.
24. Permission for copying clerk-monitors to take second-session examinations for admission to the classification of assistant instructors.
25. Equality in base salary for substitute instructors and monitors of the secondary classification.
26. Alignment of the pay-scale for secondary classification monitors with that for the secondary classification agents of the Federal Government.
27. Integration of all regional school directors into the classification of principals.
28. Offering of examinations for integration into the assistant instructor classification.
29. Opportunity for those integrated into the assistant instructor classification after 1949 to take the CAP [not identified] examinations.
30. Reopening of competitive examinations for agricultural wardens.
31. Authorization to district office receptionists to wear the same uniform as those in Saint Louis, Senegal.
32. Travel allowance to administrative secretaries serving with canton chiefs.
33. Pay alignment of administrative secretaries with canton chiefs.
34. Risk compensation to nurses and weather bureau personnel.
35. Workmen's compensation.

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36. Assignment of vehicles to stations removed from villages.
37. Application of order in council No 3645 (dated 18 June 1951) to specialized nurses (integration into the classification of assistant hygienic technicians).
38. Authorization of a 6-month course, irrespective of seniority, at the Dakar Nursing School.
39. Permission, on completion of the above course and a purely technical examination, for integration into the technical classification of hygienic assistants.
40. Substantial increase of responsibility compensation to PTT (Postes, Telegraphes, et Telephones, Posts, Telegraphs, and Telephones) ticket-window and special personnel.

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